The level of perceived support and its effects on retention rate of novice teachers in urban middle schools.

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**Introduction:**

* From a personal experience, I believe that the support and individual attention provided by the principal, staff and the administration is the key in teacher retention. As a novice teacher myself, I feel that my principal and administration took the time to assist me in understanding our school culture. Yet, many of my less supported colleagues have already changed schools, or are very unhappy with the teaching profession as a whole.
  + *What can be done to help new and novice teachers?*
  + *What Leadership styles support new and novice teachers?*
  + *How does this effect teacher retention?*

**The Problem**

* It is estimated that 50% of beginning teachers will leave the profession with-in six years.” (O’Brian, B. 2003).
* Without an adequate support system, a novice teacher can become frustrated, depressed, isolate, anxious and resentful (Norman & Floyd, 2005 ).
* Providing adequate support can play a role in overcoming these challenges and reducing teacher attrition (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004)

The purpose of research is to diminish new teacher isolation investigate the types of support that would be valuable for beginning teachers during induction years, and thus potentially increase overall teacher satisfaction and retention.

1. Teacher experience, which requires teachers be retained, has a positive impact on students therefore, knowledge of factors that increase teacher retention can guide administrators in implementing policies to reduce staff turnover
2. Principals can use information about the outcomes of the research to guide daily professional practice
3. Superintendents can use information when recruiting and hiring new principals.
4. Principals and mentors can share responsibility for new teacher induction, using information obtained from the new teachers themselves

Novice teachers face many difficulties their first years in the educational profession. Studies have been done on the correlation between retention rate and the type and amount of support given to novice, urban middle school teachers. It is hypothesized that the novice teacher’s perceived level of support provided by the principal, administration, and staff affects their retention rate.

The support and guidance of mentors colleagues, administrations and principles are vital to the needs of a novice teachers development and success. The strengths and weaknesses of novice teachers must be identified so that the proper support can be provided . Systems must be put in place that support and nurture the development of new teacher . A focused effort on this problem is needed if we are to provide our students with consistent and competent educators. Teachers from schools who are structured and organized around the growth of teachers and students feel more competent and able to meet the demands placed on them(Hope, 1999, Ganser, 2003, Stansbury, 2001 ).

* A significant relationship can be found between quality mentoring and its effect on the outcomes of a teacher’s feelings of success and student achievement. Predictors of a teachers level of commitment include the perceptions of how their teaching will effect student learning and learning opportunities which include mentoring and other professional development opportunities (Rockoff, 2008, Rosenhotz, Simpson, 1990).
* Quality mentors must be skilled at providing instructional support and should be models of lifelong learners. Ideally, the mentor is a teacher at the same school as the novice teacher. They should be empathetic, understanding and non-judgmental. They must have string interpersonal skills. Mentors must provide novice teachers with hope and optimism and they must be deeply committed to the role of mentor (Rockoff, 2008, Rowley, 1999, Terrell, 2005).
* The importance of actively involving novice teachers in existing learning communities where new and veteran teachers work with principles through collaboration, study and research. An essential element is that all share the responsibility for each others success and the success of students. When new teachers participate in professional learning communities it has a powerful effect on their abilities to develop effective teaching strategies that show results in meeting students needs. Mentorship requires a collective effort and involvement when teaching is viewed as an intellectual, moral and political endeavor (Cherian, Daniel, 2009, Grossman, Valencia, Yoon, Lee, 2005, Watkins, 2005).
  + There is gap between the perception and reality between the support principles feel they are giving new teachers and the support novice teachers feel they are getting. Often support systems are inadequate or virtually non-existent. Too often schools fall short in meeting some of the most basic conditions needed to succeed. The pressure of managing a classroom compounded by a basic lack of resources leaves new teachers unprepared socially, professionally and emotionally (Angelle, 2002, Cookson, Nagel, Carreker, 2005, Moore, 2008, Powell, 2004).
  + Negative school experiences and inadequate support can damage the professional life of novice teachers causing fear, isolation, self doubt and frustration that ultimately causes them to leave the profession. These experiences not only damage their professional life and development but also invade upon their personal lives. The sink or swim attitude encourages new teachers to cling to practices and attitudes that help them survive but do not serve the needs of their students
  + Despite research findings noting the importance of positive induction experiences for new teachers all districts are not required to have mentorship programs. Many educational budgets do not believe mentorship programs are worthwhile. State and district contexts also shape beliefs, concerns, practices and opportunities for learning (Hope,1999, Grossman, Valencia, 2001).
  + Working conditions and issues of support are primary factors in teacher retention. “Put a good teacher in a bad system and the system wins every single time” (Schwartz, Wurtzel, Olsen, 2007). The role of school districts and administrative structures are key features in developing effective leadership roles and preparation programs that train administrators who can provide teachers with success. We can retain teachers by giving them respect , support and a voice in decision making (Grossman, Valencia, 2001, Luther, Richmond, 2009).

Participants

* Four novice teachers with 1-3 years of teaching experience.

Instruments

* Pre survey
* Post survey
* Consent form
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